

2. Agriculture—Cranganur Rs. 85

Mr. T. K. Nayar (*Minister for Rural Development*): I move for an allotment of Rs. 85 under "2-Agriculture—Cranganur".

Demand put and carried

39. Miscellaneous—Rs. 10,74,023

Rao Sahib M. M. Paul (*Director of Food Supplies*): I move for an allotment of Rs. 10,74,023 under "39-Miscellaneous" and in doing so I may be permitted to make a few general observations in regard to some of the specific points raised in the course of the debate on the working of the Food Control Measures. Our State is a deficit area in regard to most of our essential foodstuffs. So we have to depend for the supplies mostly from what we can import from outside. One supreme difficulty we experienced in importing the food stuffs is to secure adequate shipping space for imports. Large quantities of foodgrains purchased for Travancore and Cochin are now lying at Karachi for want of shipping space. Similarly we could not transport in time from the Central Provinces a large quantity of pulses purchased for the States, due to difficulty to get wagons. The unfortunate fire accident in Bombay during the year added to our difficulties in this respect. But in spite of all these difficulties the food position of the State has on the whole been much better than that of last year. We have been able to secure larger quantities of foodstuffs from outside. Our local purchases also have been larger. Our purchase last year amounted under procurement scheme to 33,93,705 paras of paddy (about 16,968 tons of rice) whereas this year up to 32nd Mithunam 1119 we have purchased nearly 52,22,853 paras of paddy (about 26,114 tons of rice). It has to be remembered that there was partial failure in regard to some of the crops. Our Viruppu crop suffered damage to an extent of about 40 per cent. The Kuttadan crop was almost a complete failure. Again the Kole and Puncha crops though it escaped the devastating floods of 1118 suffered some damages due to draught, infection of pests and ingress of salt water. The total damage on this account is roughly estimated to be about 30 per cent.

As a result of the increased quantities of rice that have arrived our stock position has improved and we have been able to create a small reserve also this year. This time last year our stock as regards rice had run very low. In regard to wheat we are in very safe position. We have large stock of it in reserve at present. Last year though we got a large supply of wheat towards the end, the supplies of wheat products were not adequate. We have now an increased supply under this item also.

Again sugar was another item for which we have got acute scarcity. Our quota of sugar for last year was only about 2,200 tons. As a result of the repeated representations made to the Government of India and through the kind efforts of the Resident for the Madras States who is taking a keen interest in our food problem, it has been possible to substantially increase our supplies of sugar. The present quota is more than double that of last year. Though this is not entirely adequate to meet our needs, it has been possible this year to meet the minimum requirements of the people to a greater extent by a most judicious use of the stock at our disposal.

Jaggery is another article for which we had scarcity last year. The quota of jaggery has been considerably increased. The quota for this year is about 7,000 tons. This with the local supplies available would, it is hoped, be enough to meet our own requirements. Madras Government has promised also to supply us further quantities of this commodity if it is found to be necessary. Another fact which I may refer to in this connection is that along with some of the unfamiliar food-stuffs we have been getting we were able to secure one product of maize, viz., maize-meal which is found to be very popular among all classes of people and it is found to be almost equal to rice for purposes of consumption. We are able to secure only comparatively a small quantity of this article. We are making all possible efforts to secure larger imports of the stuff. I have just received information that a firm in Raipur, which is engaged in the manufacture of maize products, is producing cornflour out of maize. I have wired for samples. If it is found that it can be used as a substitute for rice, as in the case of maize-meal, it will be of substantial help to us in reducing the hardships we suffer due to scarcity of rice.

Before I proceed to reply to some of the points raised in the course of the debate, I wish to express my thanks to the House for the appreciation shown for whatever success we might have achieved in tackling this difficult problem of food and price control. I can assure the